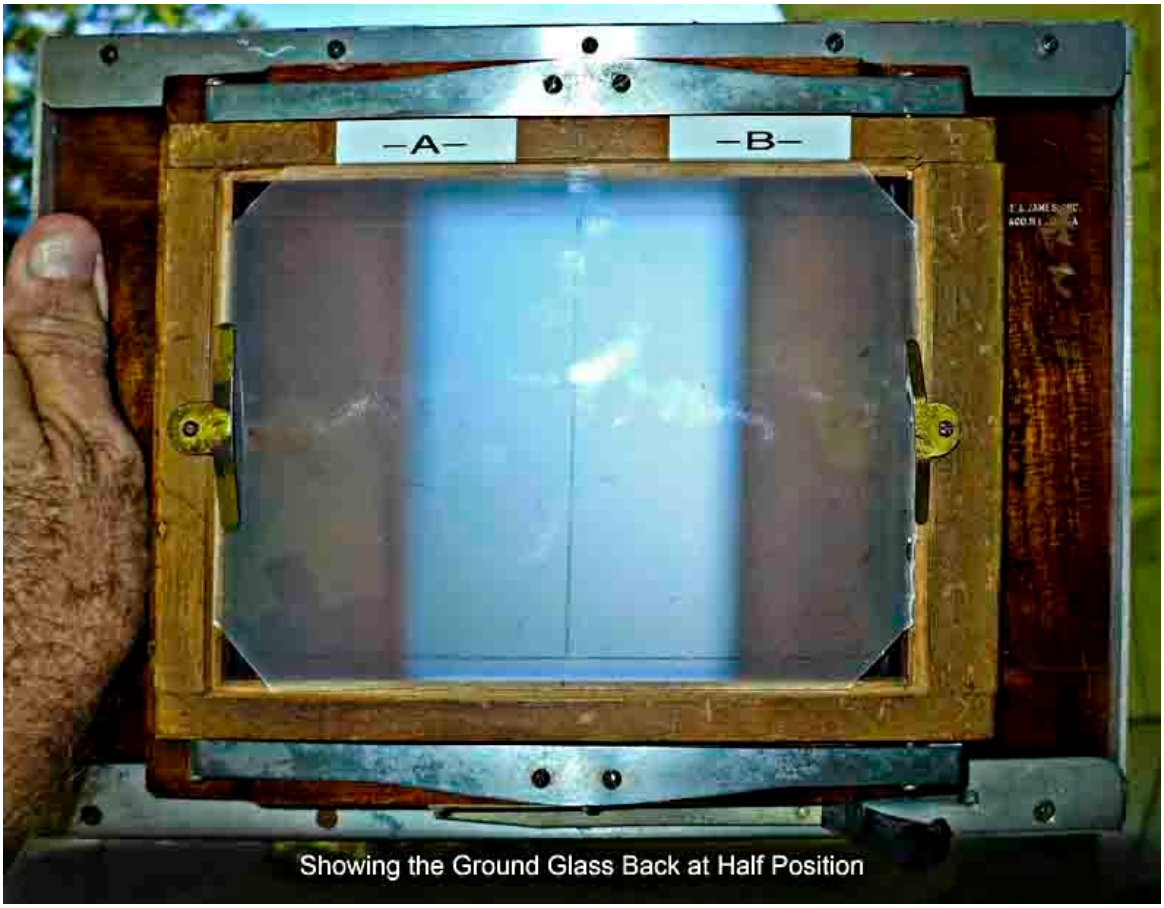
Using a “Split-Frame” Camera for Making Comparison Images

I have in my “collection” of equipment for Large Format cameras some items that are rather unique in their design. One of these is the “Split-Frame” attachment for the Burke & James 5X7 inch camera. I found it on E-Bay a few years ago for a very good price (forgot just now how much), and I bought it.

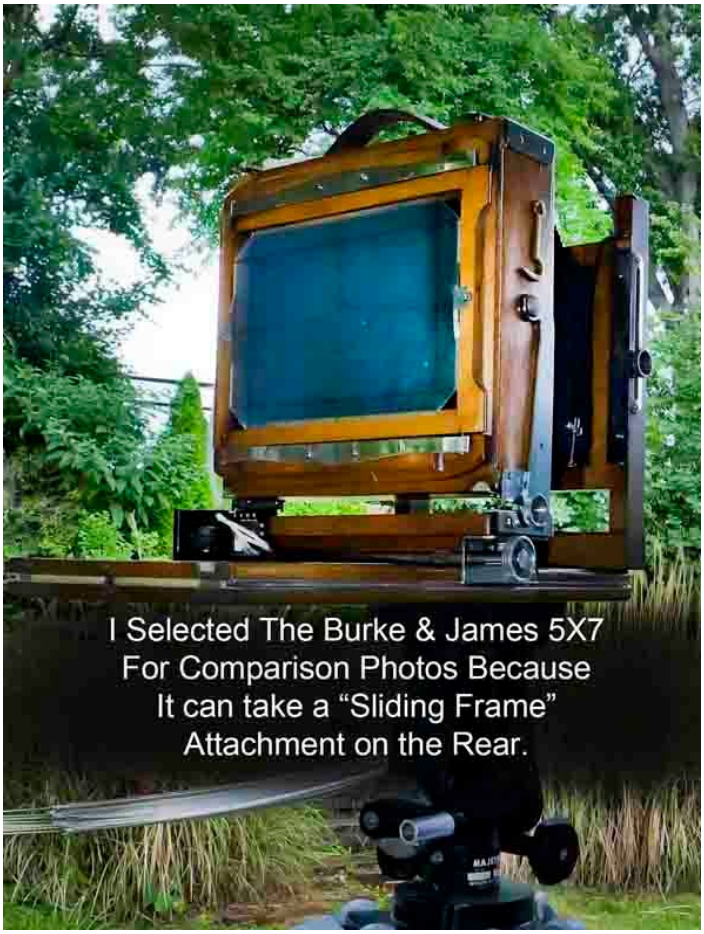


Showing the Ground Glass Back at Half Position

The original purpose for this attachment, was used in police departments for the making of arrest and confection photographs (*Mug-Shots*). I shall make use of this for the making of two photographs on One Sheet of 5X7 inch films and paper negatives in the vertical position. With this tool I can make “comparison” images “side by side. This shall assure that the development strength, and times are equal with each other.

At the Ground Glass of The “Sliding-Frame” In The “A” Position For the First Exposure.

With the “Sliding Back” in ‘B’ Position for the Second Exposure

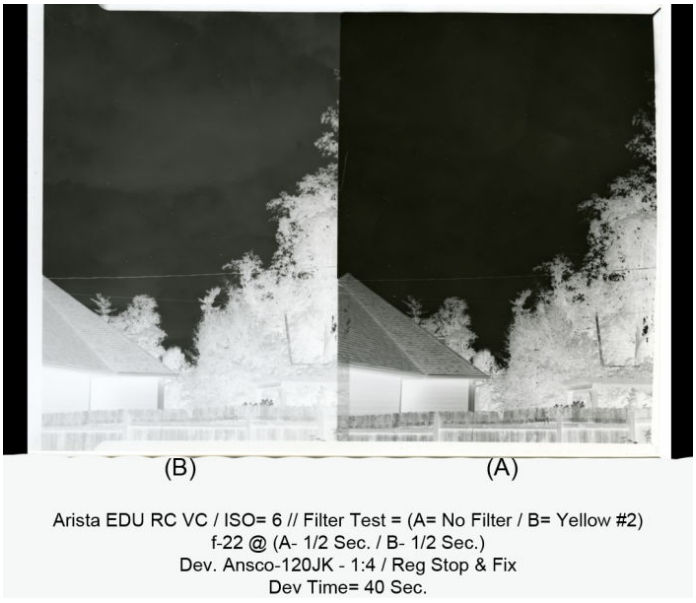


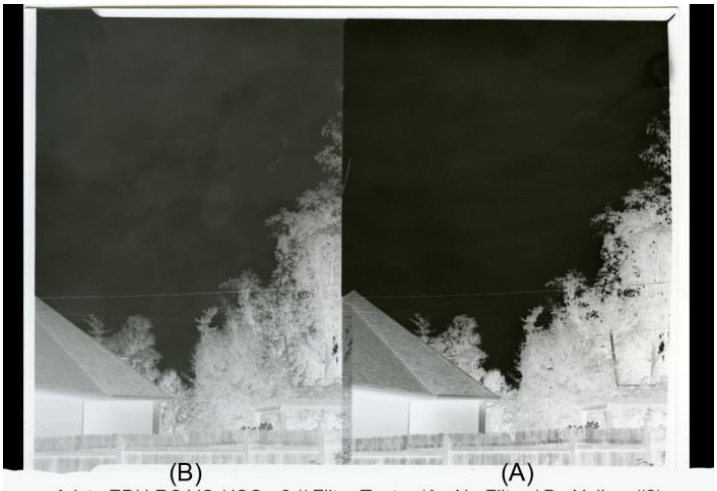
B&J Without the Sliding Frame

With the Sliding Frame

Because this "sliding back" was made for a Burke & James 5X7, I did not have to make any modifications to the back (nor the camera). All that I did was to clean the Groung Glass and the wood frame so it would slide Left and Right. This works well for it's original purpose, and what I intend to do with it.

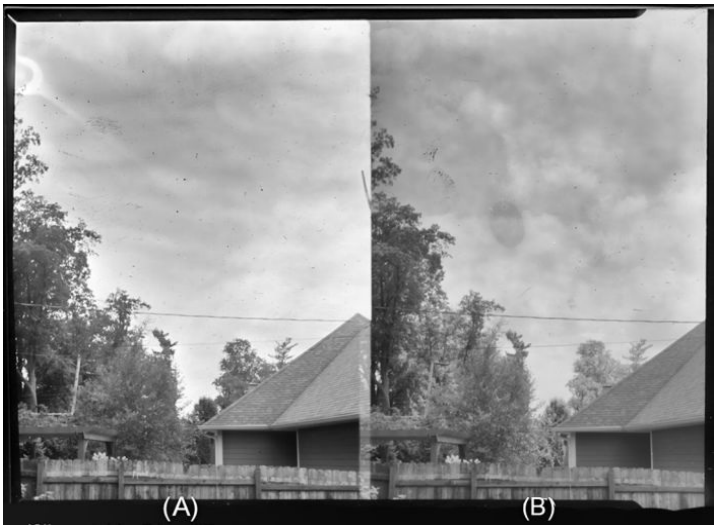
Here are a few Side By Side samples:





(B) (A)

Arista EDU RC VC / ISO= 6 // Filter Test = (A= No Filter / B= Yellow #2)
f-22 @ (A- 1/2 Sec. / B- 1 Sec.)
Dev. Ansco-120JK - 1:4 / Reg Stop & Fix
Dev Time= 40 Sec.



(B) (A)

Arista EDU RC VC / ISO= 6 // Filter Test = (A= No Filter / B= Orange #16 Tiffen)
f-22 @ (A- 1/2 Sec. / B- 1 Sec.)
Dev. Ansco-120JK - 1:4 / Reg Stop & Fix
Dev Time= 40 Sec.

(B) (A)

Arista EDU RC VC / ISO= 6 // Filter Test = (A= No Filter / B= Orange X2 stacked)
f-22 @ (A- 1/2 Sec.) / (B- 1 Sec.)
Dev. Ansco-120JK - 1:4 / Reg Stop & Fix
Dev Time= 40 Sec.

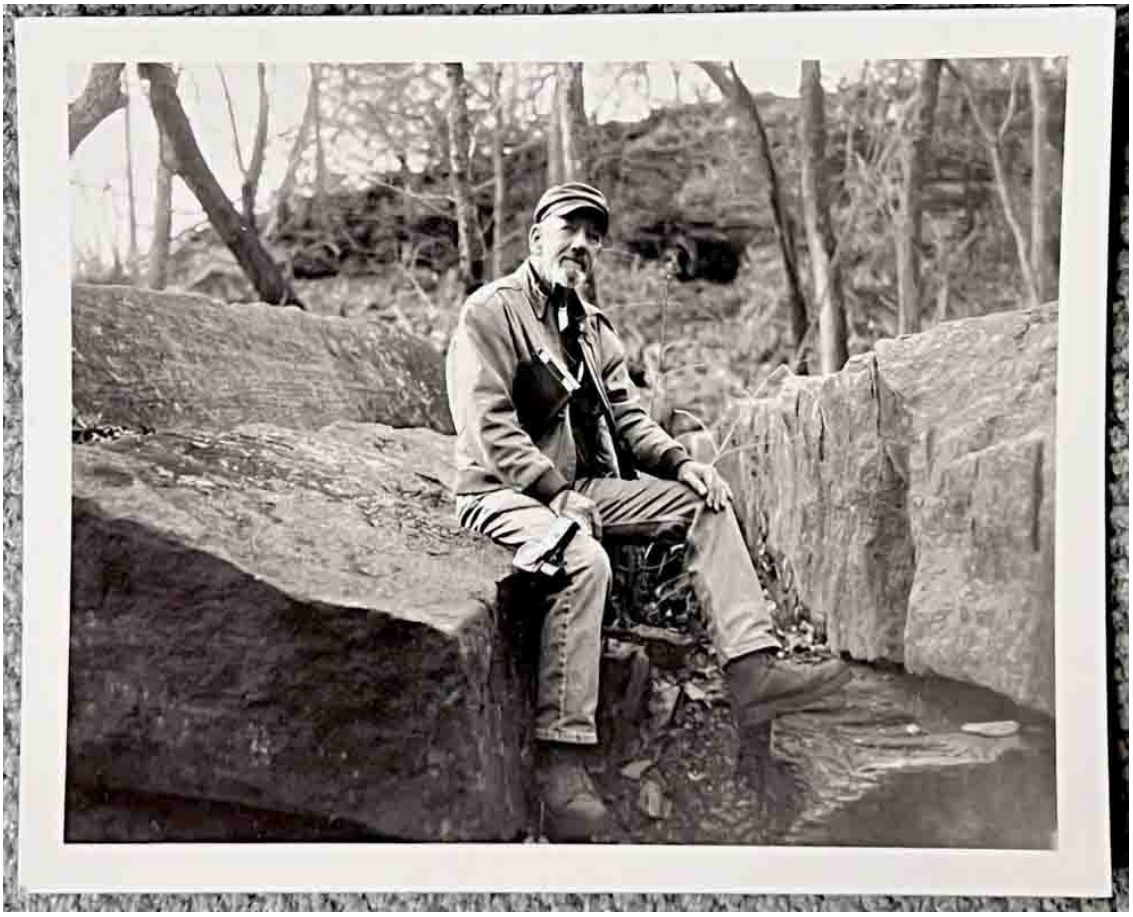
When I first thought of buying this, I was thinking of making side by side portraits. However - This sliding frame came in handy for illustrations of comparisons.

I do not know just how many of this sort of “tool” is available for sale. I do know that these are not made any longer for the making of “mug shots” at law enforcement. And I know that there are a few other photographer // builders can make one. As I was taking this frame apart I noticed that it was of a very simple design. I think that I would be able to build one. However - Now that I have this, the “need” for another is not really cost effective. I can use the wood for other projects.

I hope that this has been informative to all who shall read it.

Thank you for taking the time to read -

James R. Kyle, Photographer, Saint Louis, Missouri U.S. of A.



Positive Photograph, from a Paper Negative, of me by Photographer, Levi Sarks - 2022